August 9, 2012

Dear Teacher,

Greetings! As this school year is about to start, we would like you to start thinking about your field expeditions at the Environmental Studies Centers (ESC) of the Institute of Florida Studies at Hillsborough Community College. Students will have the opportunity to experience Florida’s marine, estuarine, and freshwater systems, as well as upland forests with our unique hands-on field experiences. There is a mandatory $10 per field trip per student fee for all field expeditions.

Our ESC Field Expeditions have historically been partially funded by a grant from the Southwest Florida Water Management District (SWFWMD). Unfortunately, SWFWMD is no longer funding educational programs, so we are unable to do travel reimbursements for buses.

IFS is now accepting reservations for all field expeditions through our online registration system for all field expeditions. We will not accept any phone calls or emails for expedition registrations until September 5th, 2012. The registration website can be found at http://www.hccfl.edu/fieldexpeditions.

Field expedition days, times, and absolute maximum number of students are listed below. Please note, participant numbers includes students, chaperones, and teachers. For example, a 5th grade class to Cockroach Bay (CRB) can have 30 students, 5 chaperones and 1 teacher for a total of 36 people. The maximum numbers must be rigidly adhered to for safety, as well as boat capacity (CRB), considerations.

**Cockroach Bay**  For 5th grade and above
- Tuesday, Thursday, Saturday  10:00am—1:00pm
- Total Max. # of Participants: 36 (Elementary or Middle Schools)
- Total Max. # of Participants: 30 (High School)

**Upper Tampa Bay Park**  For 4th grade and above
- Monday, Wednesday, Friday  10:00am—1:00pm
- Total Max. # of Participants: 40 per group (can be combination of two or more classes)

**English Creek**  For all students
- Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday  10:00am—1:00pm
- Total Max. # of Participants: 40 per group (can be combination of two or more classes)

**Institute of Florida Studies at Nature’s Classroom**

(Note: This is an IFS Program conducted at the Nature’s Classroom site. It is not a Nature’s Classroom program.)

**For all students OTHER THAN SIXTH GRADE**
- Monday, Wednesday, Friday  10:00am—1:00pm
- Total Max. # of Participants: 40 per group (can be combination of two or more classes)
Any teacher who has not actively participated in our field expeditions to Upper Tampa Bay Park or Cockroach Bay before must attend a **Mandatory Teacher Training Day.** This is of the utmost importance, especially at Cockroach Bay where the teacher is put on an island with a group of students and must be aware of what to do and where to do it.

**Teacher Training at Upper Tampa Bay:** Thursday, September 6th, 2012 4:00pm—5:00pm  
**Teacher Training at Cockroach Bay:** Saturday, September 15th, 2012 10:00am—12:00 noon

This year we are implementing a new process of Field Expedition reservation, confirmation, and invoicing. In an attempt to reduce the cost of cancellations and last-minute no-shows, IFS is requiring a $50 deposit per school for reservations. This is a one-time charge, and will be applied towards Field Expedition invoices. After a school registers, the $50 invoice will be sent via U.S. Mail as well as electronically; schools will have 30 days to pay the deposit. IFS will be contacting schools the week before their trip to reconfirm. **We will also be implementing a cancelation or no-show fee of $50** for schools that cancel scheduled trips or do not show up for their trip. These new policies will ensure the continued ability of IFS to offer quality programs at a low cost, as well as allow more opportunity for schools to find open dates for their expeditions. For the full policy description for confirmations and cancellations, please visit our website at [www.hccfl.com/ifs](http://www.hccfl.com/ifs).

Sincerely,

Sean Nordquist  
Education Coordinator